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Telescoping Mechanics: A New Paradigm for Composite Behavior Simulation

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It is to be understood that the order of the authors does not reflect their contributions in the development, implementation and validation of telescoping composite mechanics. Their contributions are about equal over time. Listed as first author indicates that he prepared the first draft of this article. It is also acknowledged that several other colleagues contributed. The authors express their gratitude and appreciation to them.

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Summary

This report reviews the application of telescoping mechanics to composites using recursive laminate theory. The elemental scale is the fiber-matrix slice, the behavior of which propagates to laminate. The results from using applications for typical, hybrid, and smart composites and composite-enhanced reinforced concrete structures illustrate the versatility and generality of telescoping scale mechanics. Comparisons with approximate, single-cell, and two- and three-dimensional finite-element methods demonstrate the accuracy and computational effectiveness of telescoping scale mechanics for predicting complex composite behavior.

Introduction

Composites contain several scales ranging from single-fiber, to multifiber ply, to multi-ply laminate (ref. 1). Formulations that simulate composite behavior are usually based on some intermediate observation scale between the most elemental (single-fiber) and the most complex (laminate). The most elemental scale was selected for simulation because it is simple to test and the tests are credible. Formulations based on the laminate observation scale, for example, are usually either material- or structural-configuration-dependent, or both, and tests must be repeated for every material or laminate. This approach is time consuming and costly. If the laminate response is taken as the observation scale, then the laminate theory based on known unidirectional composite (ply) properties is viewed as the mesomechanics scale. Micromechanics is considered the microscale, where formulation begins with constituent (fiber and matrix) properties and incorporates composite-processing variables such as the fiber volume ratio, the void volume ratio, processing condition, and others.

Formulations of structural response based on simulated component information are viewed as mesostructural mechanics; those based on variables that describe the simulated component response are viewed as microstructural mechanics. These two examples are generic and apply to other situations, such as (1) coupon testing versus granular materials structure, (2) granular structure versus metallurgical formulations, (3) polymer chains versus physical chemistry formulations, and (4) structural system response versus finite-element formulations. A new, more generic paradigm is telescoping scale mechanics formulations based on elemental-level variables and the subsequent propagation of that information to any progressively higher observation scale by the recursive application of laminate theory (ref. 2).

A representative example of telescoping scale mechanics is composite mechanics, which is performed by repeated application of laminate theory from the fiber slice scale (fiber substructuring), where environmental and local fiber architecture effects are included, to ply scale and laminate scale. The main advantage of telescoping scale mechanics is that it bypasses classical differential and integral calculus,

although it requires computer codes to perform simulation effectively. The objectives of this report are to describe telescoping scale mechanics and to demonstrate its generic features by using it to predict information observed at different hierarchical scales (ply laminate, structure) in five sample cases: (1) homogeneous composites, (2) hybrid composites, (3) smart composites, (4) composite-enhanced reinforced concrete structures, and (5) particulate composites. These are described with the governing equations and typical results. It is important to note that telescoping scale mechanics is only viable by computational simulation. The focus of this work is on what can be done rather than on specific details of the process.

Telescoping Mechanics

To describe telescoping mechanics for the simulation of composite behavior, it is helpful to define the multiple scales inherent in composites. Herein, composite scale refers to both substructuring (differential line) and telescoping (integration line). Composite scale substructuring refers to the substructuring of a laminate progressively to lower consistent scales through the thickness: multiple-fiber ply, single-fiber ply through the thickness of a ply, unit cell, and single-fiber slicing (fiber substructuring by slicing within a single fiber). Scale telescoping reverses the process of substructuring. Either scale direction can be simulated by the recursive application of laminate theory. This concept of telescoping mechanics is illustrated schematically in figure 1.

Starting with laminates, it is possible to progressively substructure (decompose) to lower scales of laminate behavior under stresses and strains. However, it is not easy to substructure laminate behavior in terms of mechanical, thermal, or other properties. Any behavior from the highest scale to the lowest can be substructured with the use of consistent formal composite mechanics methods. Formal scale substructuring methods are the inverse of scale telescoping methods.

Figure 1 shows the various scales in the telescoping sequence: (a) the slice, whose scale is a fraction of the fiber diameter; (b) the single fiber embedded in a matrix (typical cell) with a scale equal to the fiber diameter plus some matrix; (c) the single-fiber typical cell when it telescopes into a multifiber ply with a scale of ply thickness; and (d) the multifiber ply when it telescopes into multi-ply laminate with a scale of laminate thickness. Other scales in the telescoping sequence up to the structural system scale (not shown in fig. 1) include the multilaminate finite element, the multifinite-element subcomponent, the multisubcomponent component, and the multicomponent composite structural system. Scales (a), (b), (c), and (d) are simulated by recursive laminate application (telescoping scale mechanics); the multilaminate finite element, the multifinite-element subcomponent, and the multisubcomponent component, being structural scales, cannot be simulated in this way.

The concept of scale telescoping by progressive laminate theory application is natural and has several advantages:

- 1. Elemental equations remain simple.
- 2. The computer keeps track of the information needed to propagate scale information to the next highest scale.
- 3. Laminate theory is widely used and extensively discussed in textbooks.
- 4. Environmental effects are easily incorporated at the scale they occur.
- 5. Fabrication processes are taken into account.
- 6. Nonlinear geometry and material behavior are incrementally simulated.
- 7. Time and related effects are also simulated incrementally or stated differently by updated Lagrangian methods.

Telescoping mechanics for composite behavior and composite mechanics will be used interchangeably in the following sections.

Homogeneous Composites

Homogeneous composites are defined herein as those made from one type of fiber in one type of matrix. They will be used as the basis to describe telescoping scale mechanics of the elemental slice, single-fiber cell, multifiber cell (single ply), and multi-ply laminate scales.

Elemental Scale

The selection of the elemental scale is critical in telescoping scale mechanics. The authors consider the fiber substructuring slice (fig. 1(a)) as the elemental scale to use for deriving the governing equations. If we assume that the slice consists of matrix, interphase, and fiber and that the behavior of the constituents is linear, the equation for the transverse modulus is

$$E_{22s} = \frac{E_{ms}E_{is}E_{fs}}{k_{ms}E_{is}E_{fs} + k_{is}E_{fs}E_{ms} + k_{fs}E_{ms}E_{is}}$$
(1)

where E is the modulus of the constituent, k is the volume ratio of the same constituent in the slice, 22 is the slice modulus on plane 2 in the 2 direction, s is the slice, m is the matrix, i is the interphase, and f is the fiber. The slice volume ratios are determined from the specified fiber diameter, average composite volume ratio, type of fiber distribution array, size (thickness or volume ratio) of the interphase, and number of slices in substructuring the fiber.

Equation (1) is simple but comprehensive because the matrix, voids, environmental effects, and interfacial disbonds or partial bonds can be included. Comparable equations can be written for other mechanical and thermal properties (ref. 3). The approach in reference 3 can be expanded to derive equations for bug-like properties.

The application of recursive laminate theory begins by stacking the slices and predicting the composite unit cell properties (schematic above slice, fig. 1(a)). The main advantage of this method is that all unit cell properties are predicted by the same assumed local uniformities or nonuniformities.

Single-Fiber Cell

Table I compares the composite ply properties predicted by the slicing approach with those predicted by methods based on the unit cell micromechanics equation shown below (ref. 4) and by three-dimensional finite-element methods (ref. 5). The comparisons range from good to very good except for the shear moduli (no explanation). In addition to being inclusive and simple, the comparisons demonstrate the effectiveness of recursive laminate theory at the fiber subscale level. Note that elements were applied in series at the slice level and in parallel at the slice stack; a form of trapezoidal numerical integration of the stacking process to represent the single-fiber cell was assumed in the derivation of equation (2):

$$E_{l22} = \frac{E_m}{1 - \sqrt{k_f \left(1 - \frac{E_{f22}}{E_{m22}}\right)}}$$
 (2)

Multifiber Ply

Commercially available tapes normally have a partially cured thickness of one ply (lamina). This includes about 15 fibers through the thickness (glass, graphite, or Kevlar). Through-the-thickness nonuniformities are represented by substructuring each of the 15 fibers into slices and then stacking them again by applying laminate theory. The results from two other micromechanics methods (fig. 2) are compared in figure 3 for mechanical properties and in figure 4 for thermal properties. Note that comparisons show three different computer codes: the Integrated Composite Analyzer (ICAN, ref. 6), Metal Matrix Composite Analyzer (METCAN, ref. 7), and Ceramic Matrix Composite Analyzer (CEMCAN, ref. 3). The ICAN and METCAN codes are based on square area unit-cell micromechanics, but METCAN also includes the interphase. The CEMCAN code is based on the fiber substructuring slice. The comparisons are good, especially between CEMCAN and METCAN.

Multi-Ply Laminate or Composite

The governing equations for simulating plate-like laminate behavior in array form are

$$\left\{\frac{\varepsilon_{co}}{\kappa_c}\right\} = \left[\frac{A_c}{B_c^T} \frac{B_c}{D_c}\right]^{-1} \left\langle \left\{\frac{N_{ca}}{M_{ca}}\right\} - \left\{\frac{N_{ct}}{M_{ct}}\right\} - \left\{\frac{N_{cm}}{M_{cm}}\right\} \right\rangle$$
(3)

where ε refers to referenced plane strains; A, B, and D refer to axial, coupling, and bending stiffnesses, respectively; N is in-plane forces; κ is curvatures; M is bending moments; c is the laminate property; o is the reference plane; a is applied (); t is the temperature; and m is the moisture. The elements of the arrays and vectors on the right side of equation (3) are evaluated by applying conventional laminate theory (ref. 6) with ply properties. The laminate properties were obtained by three applications (slice, multifiber ply, multi-ply) of conventional laminate theory.

Equation (3) is used as input for the finite-element structural analysis of general composite plate-like structures (ref. 6). A typical result obtained from this type of composite structural analysis is shown in figure 5 along with measured data comparisons (ref. 8). The agreement is very good. Note that the recursive application of laminate theory is so generic that it simplifies the simulation of several other composite architectures, which will be described in the next section.

Applications With Hybrid and Smart Composites

The following examples show how the recursive application of laminate theory can simulate hybrid and smart composite behavior.

Hybrid Composites

There are two types of hybrid composites: interply (ply by ply) and intraply (tows of different fibers placed side by side in the same ply). Interply hybrid composites are comparable to homogeneous composites, but each ply is made from a different fiber and matrix. The recursive application of laminate theory to interply hybrids is identical to that already described. The structure of intraply hybrid composites is not comparable to homogeneous composites, as can be seen in figure 6 (ref. 9). This simulation requires additional laminate applications: two for the simulation of each intraply hybrid composite as an individual ply prior to laminate simulation, as contrasted to one for homogeneous composites.

The micromechanics equation for predicting the transverse modulus of an intraply hybrid composite is given by (ref. 10)

$$E_{HC2} = \frac{E_{mp}}{\left[1 - k_{fp}\right] \left(1 - \frac{E_{mp}}{E_{fp}}\right) + V_{sc} \left\{\frac{E_{mp}}{E_{ms}}\left[1 - \sqrt{k_{fs}}\left(1 - \frac{E_{ms}}{E_{f2s}}\right)\right] - \left[1 - k_{fp}\left(1 - \frac{E_{mp}}{E_{f2p}}\right)\right]\right\}}$$
(4)

where E is the ply modulus, k is the fiber volume ratio, H is the hybrid, C is the composite, f is the fiber, p is the primary composite, m is the matrix, and s is the secondary composite. Predictions obtained from equation (4) are compared with more approximate equations, the recursive laminate theory, the two-dimensional finite element, and the measured data in table II (ref. 10).

Additional predictions of properties with the use of telescoping scale mechanics for intraply hybrid composites are shown in figure 7 (ref. 9). Considering the computational speed with which they were obtained, the comparisons are very good. Collectively, the comparisons in table II and figure 7 demonstrate the computational expediency, generality, and versatility of telescoping scale mechanics with the recursive application of conventional laminate theory.

Smart Composites

The procedure used in telescoping scale mechanics for simulating the behavior of smart composite and laminate structures is similar to that used for hybrid composites. The intraply or interply hybrid composite concept is adapted to smart composite structures. Intraply hybrid composites are made by intermixing different fibers in the same matrix and the same ply. Interply hybrid composites have plies made from a different fiber matrix. A schematic of a unidirectional intraply hybrid composite is shown in figure 6. For further discussion see references 9 and 10.

A smart composite structure consists of smart material (fiber-like sensors and actuators) embedded preferably in the same matrix to replace the secondary composite in the intraply hybrid (schematic, fig. 8). Telescoping scale mechanics treats the sensors and actuators like other intraply hybrids, but with the properties of the smart material. Note that different smart materials can be used for different plies, depending on the design requirements. Plies with smart materials can then be handled as interply hybrids, and the same telescoping scale mechanics can be applied to simulate their behavior. The secondary composite is replaced by a smart or adaptive device for either sensor or actuator, or both. The geometric concept is schematically illustrated in figure 8, and the corresponding intraply hybrid representation is shown in figure 9 (ref. 11). Typical results obtained from reference 11 when 0° plies are controlled by smart material are shown in table III, and those obtained when +45° plies are controlled by smart material are shown in table IV. Central magnitudes can be selected to reduce stress to the desired magnitudes. Evaluations of this type are difficult to achieve as readily with conventional composite mechanics, including the commonly used laminate theory or any other formulations.

Composite-Enhanced Reinforced Concrete Structures

Telescoping scale mechanics is also applicable to the hierarchical simulation of composite-enhanced reinforced concrete infrastructures (ref. 12). A typical cross section of two reinforced concrete structural members is shown in figure 10. Note that the fiber composite laminate is placed at the bottom to restore or enhance the tensile strength of these sections. The section properties required for finite-element structural analysis are obtained by telescoping scale mechanics of the layered section. The scale hierarchy includes fiber composite enhancement, single or two-way steel reinforcement with concrete, and several

concrete layers. The concrete properties are simulated by applying particulate telescoping scale mechanics first to cement, sand, and then gravel (ref. 13). These concrete properties are then used with reinforced steel bars to simulate the layer as a ply in the composite scale telescoping hierarchy.

Other Higher Scales

The next scale in the structural hierarchy is the finite element. A schematic of a finite-element model for a reinforced concrete arch with composite enhancements is shown in figure 11 (ref. 12). Note the three different structural sections and the tapering width of the arch. Each finite element constitutes a structural mesoscale and has a different meso structure and different stiffness properties, consistent with the previously stated definition. All finite elements form the structure and therefore the structural scale, which is the highest scale in the structural scale telescoping hierarchy.

Progressive fracture is employed to evaluate the strength enhancement and structural damage tolerance of the arch attributable to enhancement with the use of composite layers. A schematic of progressive fracture simulation is shown in figure 12. Note that hierarchical scale telescoping starts with the cement and sand "nanoscale" and ends at the microstructural scale (left side of figure). Also, hierarchical scale telescoping is essential to synthesize gravel structural properties. Progressive hierarchical scale substructuring (decomposition, right side of figure) starts from the structural scale and ends at the nanoscale, where damage initiation, growth, and progression are identified and tracked. Typical results are shown in figure 13 (ref. 12). As can be seen, composite laminate placed at the bottom layer provides the most effective enhancement. Progressive fracture to evaluate strength enhancement of composite-repaired or enhanced reinforced concrete structures is useful for illustrating the hierarchy of various composites, and structural scales and telescoping scale mechanics.

Conclusions

Telescoping scale mechanics is used with the recursive application of laminate theory to develop formulations based on the lowest possible elemental-scale equations for all composite properties. Composite behavior is then synthesized by recursive application of laminate theory up to the laminate scale. The laminate response is decomposed to lower scales by progressive laminate substructuring using laminate theory. Typical results are compared with those obtained from other methods, such as single-cell micromechanics and two- or three-dimensional finite-element analysis. These comparisons demonstrate the relative inclusiveness, accuracy, and computational effectiveness of a telescoping scale for composite mechanics. Additional results from homogeneous, hybrid, smart, and particulate composites and from composite-enhanced reinforced concrete structures illustrate the generality and versatility of the method. These results show that laminate theory is an efficient computational algorithm for composite mechanics and for homogeneous materials that experience progressive, through-the-thickness, nonlinear behavior as well.

Appendix—General Remarks

Frequent reference is made herein to (1) hierarchical scales, (2) progressive telescoping or substructuring, (3) telescoping scale mechanics, and (4) telescoping scales. Both major and subtle distinctions are drawn between these terms, even though they may sound similar to those unfamiliar with the reported work. The following remarks explain how they have been specifically used herein.

Hierarchical scale (refs. 1 and 13) denotes the sequential representation of scales in composites such as micro, ply, laminate, component, finite element, substructural, and structural. However, it does not use recursively the laminate computational algorithm for all scales.

Progressive telescoping (ref. 2) scales describes formulations that start with the smallest reference scale and progressively synthesize specific behavior to higher scales. Scale *substructuring* formulations start with the largest scale and progressively decompose the response to lower scales. Composite mechanics includes both. The subtle difference is that the fundamental scale uses simple equations, and telescoping and composite mechanics do not.

Telescoping scale mechanics (ref. 12) denotes hierarchical scale telescoping or decomposition by recursive application of laminate theory alone, without any recourse to additional formulations for different scales. The first (fundamental) scale is based on micromechanics equations.

Telescoping scale (ref. 3) denotes basic formulations at the lowest scale of a particulate (particle-like nonfiber) composite with triphase constituents. The basic formulation homogenizes the tri-phase constituents into a matrix. This matrix is used with the next scale particulates and their respective interphase to homogenize the composite, and so on, until the largest scale particulate has been homogenized. In this use the basic formulation is the same, but the variables in it change to represent the scale to which they are applied. Scale telescoping is akin to fractals, because progressive homogenization explicitly recognizes the variables of each scale up to the present scale.

Though results are not presented here, telescoping scale mechanics are equally applicable to homogeneous materials that experience progressive, through-the-thickness, nonlinear material behavior (ref. 14), to structural sandwiches (ref. 15), to three-dimensional fiber-reinforced composites (ref. 16), and to woven fabric composites (ref. 17). Simulations for these are more subtle and require innovative thinking.

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TABLE I.—SINGLE-FIBER CELL COMPARISONS [AS-graphite fiber and intermediate modulus epoxy;

fiber volume ratio, 0.62.]

Property	Three-dimensional finite element		Telescoping composite
	Multicell	Unit-cell	mechanics
		square	
		array	
Moduli, Mpsi			
Longitudinal (11)	19.5	19.5	19.5
Transverse (22)	1.24	1.22	1.22
Shear (12)	0.87	0.65	0.65
Shear (23)	0.61	0.38	.43
Poisson's ratio			
v_{12}	0.25	0.32	.25
V_{23}	0.26	0.37	.30

^aThese relatively large differences result from difficulties in determining proper boundary conditions to represent classical shear definitions.

TABLE II.—COMPARISON SUMMARY OF THERMAL AND ELASTIC PROPERTIES OF INTRAPLY HYBRID COMPOSITES

1	INTRAPLY HY	BRID COMPOSI			1
Property and units		Analysis m	ethod		Experimental
3	Approximate (rule-of- mixtures) ^a	Telescoping composite mechanics ^b	Intraply hybrid micro-	Finite element ^d	
1			mechanics ^c		
Elastic modulus, 10 ⁶ psi					
E_{HC1}	16.6	16.6	16.6		17.7
E_{HC2}	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	e1.7
E_{HC3}	2.3	2.3	2.3		
Shear modulus, 10 ⁶ psi					
G_{HC12}	0.83	0.84	0.70		e0.90
$G_{HC\ 23}$.40	.40	.39	.40	
$G_{HC~13}$.83	.84	.84		
Poisson's ratio					
v_{HC12}	0.25	0.24	0.25		0.30
υ _{HC 32}	.48	.48	.48	.46	
υ _{HC 13}	.25	.24	.27		
Stress, 10 ⁶ in./in./°F					
$\Phi_{\mathit{HC}1}$	0.68	0.51	0.52		
Φ_{HC2}	17.0	17.6	16.8		
Φ_{HC3}	17.0	17.6	17.4	17.1	

^aEquations from ref. 1.

bObtained using recursive laminate theory.

CMicromechanics equations from ref. 10.

dFinite-element analysis using NASTRAN.

^{*}These relatively large differences result from difficulties in determining proper boundary conditions to represent classical shear definitions.

TABLE III.—PREDICTED MEAN PLY STRESSES WITH CONTROL IN 0° PLIES

Source	Ply orientation, deg											
		+45			-45			0			90	
	Mean ply stress, ksi					•						
	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S	σ_L	σ_T	σ_{S}	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S
External force	-61.8	-5.3	-1.1	-49.1	-3.6	0.8	-15.1	-3.1	0.1	-11.6	-0.6	0
Actuation strain	8.2	0.6	0.5	5.7	0.4	-0.4	-76.4	-12.5	0	2.3	0	0
Combined effect	-53.6	-4.7	-0.6	-43.4	-3.2	0.4	-91.5	-15.8	0.1	-9.3	-0.6	0

TABLE IV.—PREDICTED MEAN PLY STRESSES WITH CONTROL IN 45° PLIES

Source	Ply orientation, deg											
		+45			-45			0			90	
	Mean ply stress, ksi											
	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S	σ_L	σ_T	σ_S
External force	-51.7	-7.3	-1.4	-53.8	-4.1	0.9	-23.2	-2.9	0	-13.3	-0.7	0
Actuation strain	-44.6	-8.6	2.1	33.1	2.5	-1.4	6.5	2.1	0	10.8	0.3	0+
Combined effect	-96.4	-15.9	0.7	-20.7	-1.6	-0.5	-16.7	-0.8	0	-2.5	-0.4	0

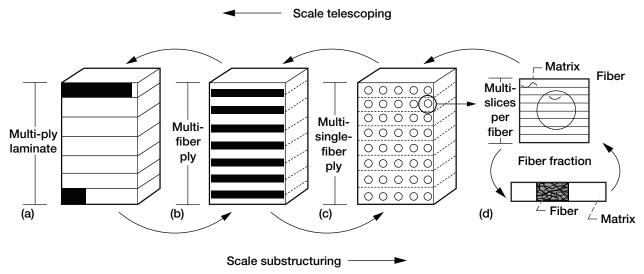


Figure 1.—Various scales in the telescoping sequence. (a) Multifiber ply after telescoping into multi-ply laminate. (b) Typical single-fiber cell after telescoping into multiple ply. (c) Single fiber embedded in matrix. (d) Slice.

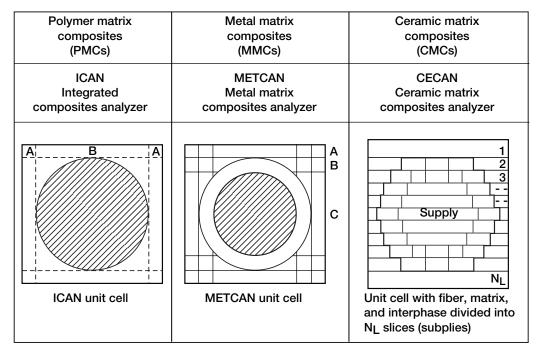


Figure 2.-Scale unit cell simulation.

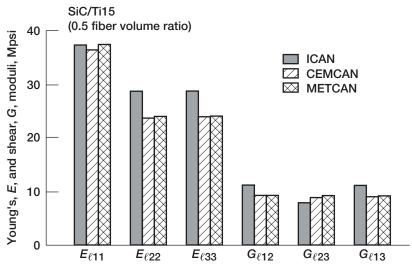


Figure 3.—Comparisons of ply mechanical properties from different scale simulations.

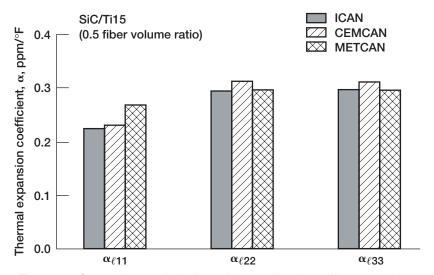


Figure 4.—Comparisons of ply thermal properties from different scale simulations.

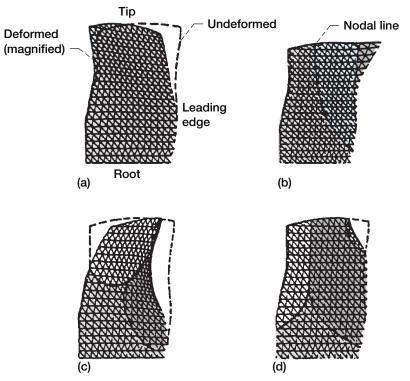


Figure 5.—Predicted and measured vibration mode shapes for high-tip-speed composite blade, HTS/K601 (\forall 40°, \forall 20°, 0°). (a) Mode shape 1. Frequency, 290/294 Hz. (b) Mode shape 2. Frequency, 782/817 Hz. (c) Mode shape 3. Frequency, 912/932 Hz. (d) Mode shape 4. Frequency, 1258/1382 Hz.

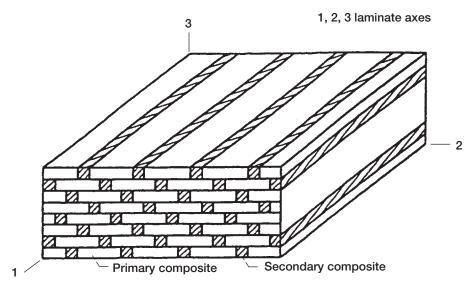


Figure 6.—Unidirectional intraply hybrid composite.

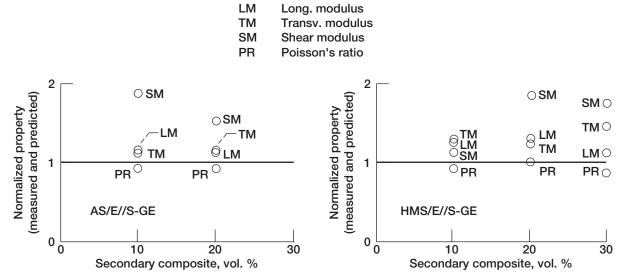


Figure 7.—Difficulties in imposing classical conditions during testing. Elastic property translation efficiency summary of intraply hybrids (graphite fiber composites hybridized with S-glass fiber composites; average of three replicates).

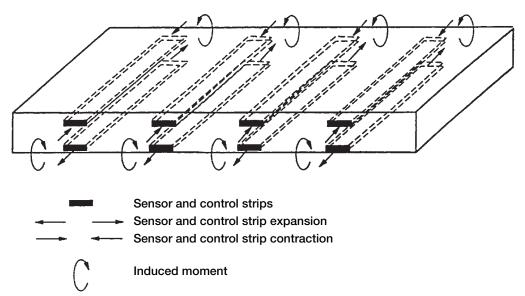


Figure 8.—Replacement of secondary composite with sensor or control materials represented by the intraply hybrid composite analogy.

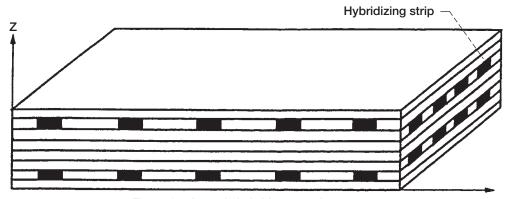


Figure 9.—Intraply hybrid composite system.

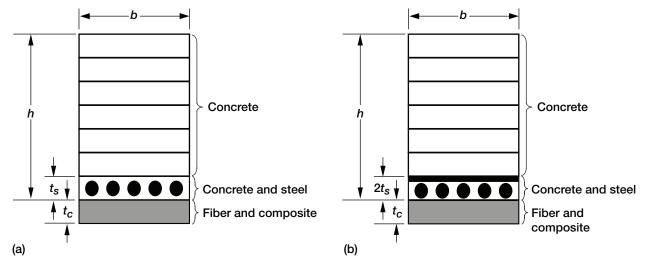


Figure 10.—Cross section of two reinforced concrete structural members. (a) One-way-reinforced section. (b) Two-way-reinforced section.

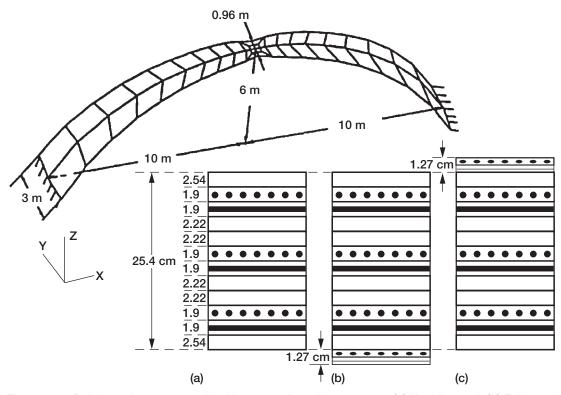


Figure 11.—Reinforced concrete arch with composite enhancements. (a) Unenhanced. (b) Enhanced at bottom. (c) Enhanced at top.

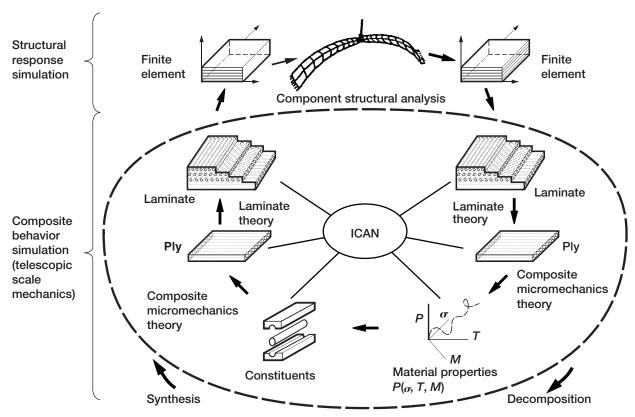


Figure 12.—Scale telescoping and scale substructuring for structural progressive fracture.

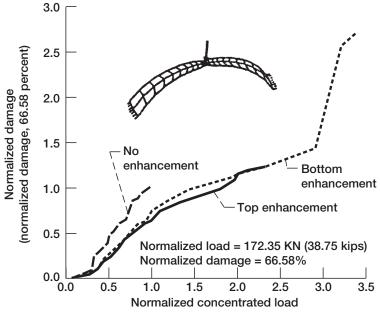


Figure 13.–Progressive structural fracture of a concrete-reinforced arch with and without composite enhancements (normalized load, 172.35 KN).

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